United Nations CRPD/C/OMN/CO/1

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
17 April 2018

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Oman*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Oman (CRPD/C/OMN/1) at its 369th and 370th meetings (see CRPD/C/SR.369 and 370), held on 20 and 21 February 2018. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 384th meeting, held on 2 March 2018.

2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Oman, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for its written replies (CRPD/C/OMN/Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues that was prepared by the Committee (CRPD/C/OMN/Q/1).

3. The Committee appreciates the fruitful dialogue held with the State party's delegation during the consideration of the report and commends the State party on its high-level and multisectoral delegation.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee commends the initial steps taken to put in place legislation, mechanisms and programmes to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including the adoption of the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2008, Royal Decree No. 18/2014 establishing the Directorate General for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities and Ministerial Decision No. 1/2009 establishing the National Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and the Social Action Strategy (2016–2025).

III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1–4)

5. The Committee notes that the State party has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention and other international human rights treaties.

6. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt measures aimed at ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and consider ratifying or acceding to other international human rights treaties to which it is not yet a party.**

7. The Committee is concerned that:

* Adopted by the Committee at its nineteenth session (14 February–9 March 2018).

(a) National legislation is not fully in line with the human rights-based approach to disability set out in the Convention, while the medical approach to disability reflects a negative image of persons with disabilities, who are depicted as individuals unable to fit into society;

(b) Derogatory terminology applied to persons with disabilities has not yet been eliminated from all laws, policies and government discourse;

(c) There has been a lack of effective consultations involving persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in engaging in human rights advocacy aimed at a better implementation of the Convention.

8. The Committee recommends that the State party, in consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, adopt all measures necessary to ensure that its legislation, policies and practices are in full compliance with the general principles and specific provisions of the Convention. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Undertake a comprehensive legislative and policy review in order to adopt, ensure and enforce the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability and a full transition to the human rights model of disability, including with respect to the new persons with disabilities bill;

(b) Ensure that derogatory terminology is eliminated from all laws, policies and government discourse;

(c) Establish formal mechanisms for the ongoing and systematic consultation with and participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, with sufficient allocation of budgetary resources to promote the meaningful participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in national affairs and all matters that concern them, including with respect to the elaboration of the new persons with disabilities bill;

(d) Promote and support the effective participation of organizations of women, children and young people with disabilities, including persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, and design mechanisms for the provision of information in accessible formats to persons with intellectual disabilities.

9. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the State party's efforts and challenges in implementing the Convention. The Committee is also concerned at reports indicating that NGOs operate within restricted boundaries in the State party.

10. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to consult and expand its dialogue with civil society organizations working in the area of human rights protection, in particular with respect to persons with disabilities, in connection with the preparation of its next periodic report. The Committee also recommends that the State party adopt specific measures, including by amending the Civil Associations Act (2000) to create and ensure an enabling environment in which civil society organizations, particularly representative organizations of persons with disabilities, may be established and freely conduct their activities in line with the Convention.

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

11. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Discrimination based on disability and denial of reasonable accommodation are not explicitly prohibited in the Basic Law of the State or in the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008;

(b) The concept of reasonable accommodation is not comprehensively defined in national legislation, nor is it well understood by employers and service providers, with the

result that persons with disabilities are unable to enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others;

(c) There is a lack of specific legislation concerning protection against multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Amend its legislation to explicitly refer to discrimination in article 17 of the Basic Law of the State, in the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008 and in all relevant national legislation to prohibit and sanction discrimination based on disability;**

(b) **Recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a prohibited ground of discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas, and adopt measures, including compensation and redress, for persons with disabilities who have faced discrimination on the basis of disability, including migrant workers;**

(c) **In consultation with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, raise awareness of the concept of reasonable accommodation and non-discrimination among public and private actors, in particular lawyers, the judiciary, law enforcement officers, civil servants, employers, educational and health professionals and persons with disabilities themselves, and provide the relevant training;**

(d) **Adopt measures in national legislation to protect persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities and persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, against multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination and provide effective sanctions against perpetrators.**

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

13. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities in obtaining access to education, employment and health care, their overall marginalization and exclusion from public and social life and discriminatory laws relating to marriage and family matters;

(b) Violence against women and girls with disabilities and the absence of specific mechanisms enabling them to lodge complaints, seek reparations or pursue the punishment of perpetrators;

(c) The absence of measures for the advancement, empowerment and development of women and girls with disabilities, including consultation with their representative organizations and participation in decision-making processes that affect them.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party take due account of article 6 of the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities in its implementation of Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals and:**

(a) **Adopt measures both in law and in practice for the elimination of all forms of multiple and intersectional discrimination, and of violence against women and girls with disabilities, introduce mechanisms for remedies and sanctions against perpetrators and provide for access to medical, psychological and legal services on an equal basis with others;**

(b) **Adopt measures for the advancement, empowerment and development of women and girls with disabilities, including participation and consultation with their representative organizations in all spheres of life, and mainstream rights for women and girls with disabilities in all national strategies and action plans for women and girls, in particular education, employment and health care, including reproductive health strategies;**

(c) **Carry out awareness-raising campaigns and education programmes at all levels, in particular within the family, to foster respect for the rights and dignity of women and girls with disabilities and combat stereotypes, prejudices and misconceptions about women and girls with disabilities;**

(d) **Strengthen capacity-building training programmes for professionals working with and/or for women and girls with disabilities, including government officials, on the rights and requirements of women and girls with disabilities;**

(e) **Strengthen the capacity of the General Directorate of Women to coordinate and develop an effective gender mainstreaming strategy to be used in all policies and programmes that address the situation of women and girls with disabilities;**

(f) **Adopt specific measures to promote access by women with disabilities to inclusive education, health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, public and social life and decision-making processes.**

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

15. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Both de jure and de facto discrimination of children with disabilities, especially with respect to access to social and health services and equal education opportunities, continues to be problematic in the State party;

(b) Boys and girls with disabilities in the State party reportedly experience high levels of abuse and violence, including corporal punishment, in the home, in schools, in institutions and in alternative and day-care settings;

(c) There is a lack of effective representation of children with disabilities in national discourse, in particular in the Child First Association and the Children's Parliament, and they are denied the opportunity to express their views, especially regarding matters that concern them.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that all children with disabilities enjoy their rights under the Convention and, in line with the principle of the best interests of the child, both de jure and de facto, including through the amendment of the Children's Act of 2014, explicitly prohibit the corporal punishment of children in all settings and intensify efforts to ensure the effective elimination of any form of discrimination against children with disabilities, through awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns and education, especially in the schools and at the community level;**

(b) **In line with the Convention and target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopt legislation and specific measures to ensure that children with disabilities are adequately protected from abuse and violence and that perpetrators are sanctioned;**

(c) **Mainstream disability rights in national strategies and action plans for children, including the adoption and implementation of a national plan for the care of children with disabilities, including in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);**

(d) **In line with the Convention and target 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopt a mechanism for conducting effective consultation with children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, and promoting their full inclusion in the Child First Association and the Children's Parliament and ensuring that full weight is given to the views of such children, on an equal basis with other children.**

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

17. While noting the various initiatives to combat stereotypes, including through the media, the Committee is nonetheless concerned about:

(a) The continued stigmatization of persons with disabilities, in particular children, by families and society at large;

(b) The absence of awareness-raising campaigns and programmes focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities;

(c) The failure to involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in awareness-raising campaigns and programmes, including in the planning and implementation of such campaigns and programmes.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue to undertake sustained public awareness campaigns involving community and religious leaders and media professionals, aimed at government officials, the public and families, to combat the stigmatization of and prejudice against persons with disabilities, with a view to reaffirming the value and dignity of such persons, in particular children with disabilities and persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure that all persons with disabilities and their families are aware of the benefits and services to which they are entitled through the disabled identification card;**

(c) **Ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes that are in conformity with the principles of the Convention and the human rights model of disability.**

Accessibility (art. 9)

19. The Committee notes the numerous initiatives to create a barrier-free society. The Committee is, however, concerned about:

(a) The lack of information on the legislation setting out accessibility standards and a complaint mechanism to enforce accessibility standards;

(b) The lack of information on the monitoring and inspection of facilities to ensure accessibility, or on compliance and sanctions;

(c) The absence of laws to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and their inclusion and participation, through their representative organizations, in developing and monitoring any accessibility plan envisaged by the State party;

(d) The composition and mandate of the Specialized Subcommittee to Address the Creation of a Barrier-Free Environment.

20. **The Committee recommends that, in line with general comment No. 2 on accessibility (2014), the State party:**

(a) **Adopt and implement legislation and policies for barrier-free facilities and services, including the Social Action Strategy, paying particular attention to the communication-related requirements of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with sensory impairments and psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, and ensuring the allocation of sufficient resources, enforceable and effective sanctions for non-compliance, obligatory accessibility criteria for public procurement and a road map for removing existing barriers, based on detailed data with indicators, together with a specific time frame and a monitoring and enforcement mechanism;**

(b) **Ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are fully involved and consulted on the development of any accessibility plan envisaged by the State party, including the Specialized Subcommittee to Address the Creation of a Barrier-Free Environment;**

(c) **Be guided by article 9 of the Convention in the implementation of targets 11.2 and 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, notably by expanding**

public transport, paying special attention to persons with disabilities, and to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for persons with disabilities.

Right to life (art. 10)

21. The Committee notes with concern reports on the cultural practices of "compassionate killing" and "honour killing", especially as they relate to children with disabilities who may be killed by their mothers.

22. **The Committee strongly recommends that the State party adopt appropriate measures to eliminate the practices of "compassionate killing" and "honour killing" especially where they affect children with disabilities, including by taking measures to address the stigmatization of and prejudice against such children, with a view to reaffirming the value and dignity of children with disabilities within the family and society at large.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

23. The Committee is concerned that the National Emergency Management System Plan does not adequately incorporate persons with disabilities. It is also concerned about the lack of information on how humanitarian aid is made accessible to persons with disabilities, including emergency-related information, evacuation systems, transport and shelters.

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in designing the National Emergency Management System Plan, and adopt and implement a comprehensive emergency and disaster risk reduction strategy that is fully inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities in all situations of risk, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The Committee also recommends that the State party adopt measures to ensure the provision of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, especially women and children, for persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities and for deaf persons, on the accessibility and inclusion of such persons in humanitarian aid, including emergency-related information, and on evacuation systems, transport and shelters.**

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

25. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Various national laws deprive persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, of their legal capacity, contrary to article 12 of the Convention;

(b) There is a lack of data on persons under guardianship, disaggregated by age, gender and type of impairment.

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Amend its legislation, in particular articles 41, 42 and 44 of the Civil Code of 2013, so as to recognize the full legal capacity of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, and introduce supported decision-making mechanisms that respect the autonomy, will and preferences of persons with disabilities in all areas of life, in line with the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law;**

(b) **Create awareness-raising programmes for persons with disabilities, their families and community members, the judiciary and the legislature, on supported decision-making and the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities;**

(c) **Adopt measures to strengthen data collection on persons under guardianship, disaggregated by age, gender and type of impairment.**

Access to justice (art. 13)

27. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The impediments that hinder access to justice by persons with disabilities, owing to insufficient knowledge of disability issues within the judicial and law enforcement sectors and a lack of substantive procedural accommodations, including a lack of accessibility within the justice system;

(b) The inadequate number of trained professional and certified sign language interpreters who are able to translate administrative and judicial proceedings for deaf persons and the unavailability of documents in accessible formats to enable blind persons and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities to participate in proceedings.

28. **The Committee recommends that, taking into account article 13 of the Convention and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that procedural accommodations are provided for persons with disabilities in all court buildings, tribunals, police stations, prisons and all places of detention;**

(b) **Ensure the availability of professional and certified sign language interpreters and documents in accessible formats such as Braille, tactile, and Easy Read, for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure their full participation in all judicial and administrative proceedings;**

(c) **Conduct training programmes and awareness-raising and information campaigns for court staff, judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials, including police and prison officials, on the need to provide access to justice for persons with disabilities;**

(d) **Adopt measures to support and empower persons with disabilities to work in the justice system as judges, prosecutors, lawyers or court staff, providing all necessary support to ensure greater access to justice by persons with disabilities.**

Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)

29. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Impairment-based detention and forced institutionalization of persons with disabilities, especially persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities;

(b) The condition of "mental hospitals" currently operating in Oman and the number of patients admitted to the Ibn Sina Hospital without their free and informed consent;

(c) Insufficient monitoring of the conditions endured by persons with disabilities in institutions and other places of detention and lack of training of staff regarding the right of persons with disabilities to reasonable accommodation.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Guided by the Committee's guidelines on the right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities (see A/72/55, annex), repeal all legislation that authorizes institutionalization without the free and informed consent of the person concerned and repeal all laws that allow for the deprivation of liberty on the basis of impairment;**

(b) **Ensure guarantees of due process of law for all persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including access to justice and remedies for unjust deprivation of liberty;**

(c) **Adopt measures to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, deprived of their liberty in all mental health facilities, and take measures to improve the quality of care therein;**

(d) **Involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the monitoring of all places where persons with disabilities may be detained and provide training for mental health professionals, law enforcement officials and prison officials on respecting the rights of persons with disabilities in mental health facilities, prisons and detention centres.**

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

31. The Committee is concerned about the inadequacy of measures to prevent abuse and violence against persons with disabilities in the home, in institutions and in alternative care and day-care settings, the fact that the corporal punishment of children is widespread in the State party and that there is insufficient awareness of complaint mechanisms and support services for victims.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt and implement legislation, policies and programmes to protect all persons with disabilities, in particular women with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and children with disabilities from all forms of abuse and violence, including corporal punishment, in particular by stepping up the implementation of the national strategy for protecting children from all types of abuses, and adopting the draft regulations on female genital mutilation under the Children's Act;**

(b) **Raise awareness about the telephone hotline to report cases of abuse, neglect and violence, ensure that the e-service complaint mechanism is accessible and inclusive, raise awareness of the complaint mechanism among persons with disabilities and their families, and provide accessible information and victim support services in all parts of the State party, in particular for women and children with disabilities;**

(c) **Ensure that all cases in which persons with disabilities, in particular children, are exposed to abuse and violence are reported and fully investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and appropriately punished and that victims are provided with effective redress, including compensation and rehabilitation;**

(d) **Ensure regular training on preventing and addressing violence against persons with disabilities for all relevant authorities and other stakeholders, including law enforcement officials, judges, social workers, health professionals and teachers, promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment, and expand parenting education programmes and support for families with children with disabilities.**

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

33. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The forced sterilization of persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, and in particular those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities;

(b) Insufficient protection of persons with disabilities, especially those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, against medical and scientific experimentation, including the use of experimental or new drugs and treatment methods related to the care of patients with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities without their free and informed consent.

34. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Ensure that both in law and in practice persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, in particular those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, including persons deprived of their legal capacity, are not subjected to forced sterilization, that perpetrators are prosecuted and sanctioned, as necessary, and that remedies are available for persons subjected to forced sterilization;**

(b) **Take all necessary measures, both in law and in practice, to protect all persons with disabilities, in particular those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, against medical and scientific experimentation, including the use of**

experimental or new drugs and treatment methods, without their free and informed consent.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

35. The Committee is concerned about the low level of awareness among persons with disabilities of available independent-living support services and ways in which to claim such assistance within their local community and the inaccessibility of such services to persons with mobility impairments, persons with disabilities in rural areas and migrant workers. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of home-based and community-based care for children with disabilities, especially in rural areas.

36. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the family and community, and systematically provide all persons with disabilities, including migrant workers and their families, with information on how to obtain access to support services and assistance that would enable them to live independently in accordance with their own choice, in particular in rural areas. The Committee also recommends that the State party undertake all necessary measures to ensure access to community services and facilities by all persons with disabilities, in all areas of life, and ensure home and community-based care for children with disabilities, including in rural areas.**

Personal mobility (art. 20)

37. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The absence of a national policy on mobility for persons with disabilities that provides for audible signal indicators at street crossings, especially for blind persons;

(b) The non-inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Transportation and Communication Subcommittee of the National Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities;

(c) The absence of trained personnel to impart mobility skills to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a national policy with adequate measures to address the mobility needs of persons with disabilities, including the acquisition of mobility devices;**

(b) **Include persons with disabilities in the Transportation and Communications Subcommittee of the National Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in order to give them an opportunity to contribute to the development of a national policy on mobility for persons with disabilities;**

(c) **Train the necessary personnel to impart mobility skills to persons who are blind or visually impaired.**

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

39. The Committee is concerned about the absence of standards to ensure access by persons with disabilities to information provided for the public, including through the mass media, in particular for persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or with a hearing disability, and persons with intellectual disabilities. The Committee is also concerned about the insufficient number of teachers trained in sign language, tactile, Easy Read and Braille to ensure accessible formats to persons with disabilities.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt legislation to ensure that information provided to the general public through the mass media is also available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of impairment, for example Braille, sign language and Easy Read, including by ensuring that websites are**

accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium;

(b) **Continue to promote sign language, including by expanding the "Understand Me" programme and through the establishment of a visual communication service, and intensify training and accreditation programmes for sign language interpreters.**

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

41. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The absence of measures to ensure the right of persons with disabilities, including those placed under guardianship, and in particular women and persons with psychosocial disabilities, to marry freely and have a family;

(b) The lack of provision of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities on the right to marry and on sexual and reproductive rights;

(c) The lack of support services to protect the parental rights of persons with disabilities.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt legislative measures to abolish all legislation and practices that discriminate against women with disabilities in marriage and family matters, especially those placed under guardianship, and in particular women and persons with psychosocial disabilities, to marry and have children;**

(b) **Take measures to ensure that information is provided in accessible formats to persons with disabilities on the right to marry and have a family, including information on reproductive health and rights;**

(c) **Adopt measures to protect the parental rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure that parents of children with disabilities are provided with adequate support and training to allow them to raise their children in the family home.**

Education (art. 24)

43. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The low number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools at all levels, especially girls with disabilities, and the high rate of non-completion and illiteracy among children with disabilities, in particular deaf children and children with multiple disabilities;

(b) Inadequate teaching methodologies and training for teachers in inclusive education, as well as the insufficient number of teachers proficient in sign language;

(c) The lack of information on budget allocations for the promotion of inclusive education, including training of teachers and for ensuring that schools are accessible, adequately staffed and funded;

(d) The absence of systematic data collection, disaggregated by sex and type of impairment, on the number of children with disabilities mainstreamed into the regular school environment, and on the enrolment and dropout of children with disabilities in both mainstream and special education schools.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt measures to abolish special schools and develop an inclusive education system, including through the adoption of laws, policies and programmes with measurable indicators and timelines;**

(b) **Ensure the provision of adequate budgetary allocations for the promotion of inclusive education, including the training of teachers, especially in sign language, and/or the provision of certified teaching assistants qualified in sign language for all subjects;**

(c) **Develop a disaggregated database on the number of children with disabilities mainstreamed into the regular school environment with adequate teaching methodologies to enable them to reach their full potential, adopt specific measures to eliminate discrimination against children with disabilities in schools and ensure that children with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are involved in effective school inclusion programmes;**

(d) **Expand educational opportunities at the tertiary level for persons with disabilities, in particular deaf students, and step up bilingual education in Arabic and English for children with disabilities prior to the tertiary level;**

(e) **Pay attention to the links between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goal in order to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training and to build and upgrade education facilities that are disability-sensitive and safe.**

Health (art. 25)

45. While welcoming the improvement and expansion of health-care services, including rehabilitation programmes and mental health-care services, for persons with disabilities in the State party, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The inadequate accessibility of hospitals and health centres for persons with disabilities in the State party, including those with motor impairments, and insufficient access to quality health care for persons with disabilities living in rural areas and for children of migrant workers;

(b) The insufficient training for primary health-care staff;

(c) The fact that the special requirements of women and girls with disabilities are not identified and addressed;

(d) The lack of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, including Braille, sign language and Easy Read for persons with sensory or with intellectual disabilities, regarding services and educational programmes, in particular for women, girls and young persons, concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights, including their right to give their free and informed consent on health matters.

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt measures to ensure that all hospitals and other health facilities are physically accessible to all persons with disabilities in all regions of the State party, including rural areas, and that high-quality health care is made available to all persons with disabilities, including women and girls, and also migrant workers and members of their families;**

(b) **Integrate the human rights-based model of disability into the training curriculum of all health professionals, emphasizing that medical services and treatment should be provided for all persons with disabilities with their free, prior and informed consent;**

(c) **Ensure the provision of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, including Braille, sign language and Easy Read for persons with sensory and mental impairments, regarding services and educational programmes available to persons with disabilities, in particular for women and girls and young persons, concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights, in line with target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, including their right to give their free and informed consent on health matters.**

Work and employment (art. 27)

47. While welcoming the establishment of the Committee for Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee is, nonetheless, concerned about:

(a) The low employment rate of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, and gender-based discrimination in the labour market, including the failure to provide paid maternity leave;

(b) The failure to provide accessible and adapted workplaces, including reasonable accommodation, especially for persons with disabilities with motor impairments;

(c) The lack of protection and compensation afforded to migrant workers, especially domestic workers, who have acquired an impairment as a result of their work in the State party;

(d) The absence of statistical data on persons with disabilities currently employed, disaggregated by age, gender, type of impairment and geographical location.

48. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private and public sectors, including through affirmative action, adopt laws and policies on reasonable accommodation, including through the amendment of the Labour Act, ensure implementation of the law requiring private enterprises with more than 50 employees to reserve at least 2 per cent of positions for persons with disabilities, and provide data on persons with disabilities currently employed in the open labour market, disaggregated by age, gender, type of impairment and geographical location;**

(b) **Adopt a strategy for the employment of persons with disabilities in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially women with disabilities, in the open labour market and adopt measures for the elimination of intersectional discrimination;**

(c) **Adopt measures to make the physical environment of workplaces accessible and adapted to persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation, especially to persons with disabilities with motor impairments, and provide training for employers at every level on respect for the concept of reasonable accommodation;**

(d) **Ensure that migrant workers, especially domestic workers, are fully and equally protected by labour law and that such workers who have acquired an impairment as a result of their work in the State party receive appropriate treatment, rehabilitation and compensation.**

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

49. The Committee is concerned about the comparatively low standard of living of persons with disabilities and the lack of awareness among persons with disabilities of the availability of social protection and poverty reduction programmes. It is also concerned about discriminatory provisions on pensions that adversely affect women with disabilities.

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to raise the living standards of persons with disabilities and their families, especially women and children with disabilities, with a view to supporting their right to social inclusion and self-reliance;**

(b) **Ensure that persons with disabilities are included in all social protection and poverty reduction programmes;**

(c) **Eliminate direct and indirect discrimination against women with disabilities by amending pension legislation to take account of the requirements of women with disabilities;**

(d) **Be guided by article 28 of the Convention in the implementation of target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

51. The Committee is concerned that election information and materials are not accessible to persons with disabilities, especially blind and deaf persons and persons with

psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, and that polling stations are often not physically accessible. It is also concerned at the lack of confidentiality in the voting process for persons with disabilities and at the reportedly low number of persons with disabilities in public office.

52. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure, through legislative and other measures, that persons with disabilities are able to obtain access to ballots, election materials and polling stations and to information in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language and Easy Read documents for persons who are blind, visually impaired or deaf or who have psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities;**

(b) **Adopt measures to improve voter education and raise awareness among persons with disabilities, including of the need for voter registration, and ensure that, when voting, persons with disabilities are allowed assistance from a person of their choice;**

(c) **Take measures to promote the participation of persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, in all areas of public and political life, including in the Majlis al-Dawla (Council of State) and the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Assembly).**

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)

53. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. It is also concerned about insufficient measures to develop deaf culture, to provide access to tourist sites, museums, art galleries, cultural centres, public parks and other public cultural facilities for all persons with disabilities and to encourage the participation of children with disabilities in recreational, leisure and sporting activities.

54. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ratify and implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, to develop deaf culture, to ensure the accessibility of tourist sites, museums, art galleries, cultural centres, public parks and other public spaces for all persons with disabilities and to encourage the participation of children with disabilities in recreational, sport and cultural activities.**

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

55. While noting the positive steps that have been taken with regard to the collection of data on persons with disabilities, including the introduction of a new methodology based on the recommendations of the Washington Group for Disability Statistics, the Committee is concerned about the inadequacy of the qualitative information, including appropriately disaggregated statistical and research data, provided in the report of the State party.

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party actively and closely collaborate with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, and adopt measures to utilize the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability in its data collection, paying due attention to the links between article 31 of the Convention and target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in the national context. It also recommends that such data be analysed in order to enable the State party to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the Convention.**

International cooperation (art. 32)

57. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities are not included, through their representative organizations, in international cooperation programmes and that a disability perspective is not sufficiently mainstreamed in the national implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that disability rights, as enshrined in the Convention, are mainstreamed in the national implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, participate effectively and are fully included and consulted in international cooperation programmes.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

59. The Committee is concerned about the lack of a comprehensive national action plan on disability and the shortage of information regarding measures taken by the National Monitoring Committee to Promote Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with respect to the implementation of the Convention by the relevant government departments. The Committee is also concerned that the National Human Rights Commission, which is responsible for monitoring the protection of human rights in the State party, is accredited with B status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions essentially owing to its limited independence, its lack of a clear mandate and the low number of complaints that it receives.

60. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Establish and implement as a matter of priority a comprehensive policy on persons with disabilities that encompasses all areas covered by the Convention, and develop a strategy with the elements necessary for its implementation, supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources;**

(b) **Ensure that the National Monitoring Committee is provided with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention at the cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels and is afforded the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective operation;**

(c) **Take immediate steps to bring the National Human Rights Commission into full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), allocate sufficient resources for its operation, ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and raise awareness about the Commission, including its complaint mechanism, in society at large, in particular among persons with disabilities.**

Cooperation and technical assistance

61. Under article 37 of the Convention, the Committee can provide technical guidance to the State party on any queries addressed to the experts via the secretariat. The State party can also seek technical assistance from United Nations specialized agencies with offices in the country or the region.

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

62. **The Committee requests the State party to provide information, within 12 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations and in accordance with article 35 (2) of the Convention, on the measures taken to implement the Committee's recommendations contained in paragraph 44 (education).**

63. **The Committee requests the State party to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. It recommends that the State party**

transmit the concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and parliament, officials in the relevant ministries, the judiciary, members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to local authorities and the media, using modern social communication strategies.

64. **The Committee strongly encourages the State party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic report.**

65. **The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, including Easy Read, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.**

Next periodic report

66. **The Committee requests the State party to submit its combined second to fourth periodic reports by 6 December 2023 and to include in them information on the implementation of the recommendations made in the present concluding observations. The Committee also requests the State party to consider submitting the above-mentioned reports under the Committee's simplified reporting procedure, according to which the Committee prepares a list of issues at least one year prior to the due date set for the report of a State party. The replies of a State party to such a list of issues constitute its report.**